

## VANPOOLS

### What is a vanpool?

Vanpools are groups of 5 to 15 commuters who share a ride to work in a van provided by Metro. Metro's VanPool program serves nearly 700 vanpools throughout ten counties. Fares are based on a group's round-trip mileage and the number of riders in the van. Metro vanpool drivers are volunteers, and all expenses for fuel, maintenance and insurance for vanpool vehicles are covered by riders' fares.

*"Our commute is so pleasant now, with the sharing  
and caring among our vanpool riders."*

*Caroline Na, HOV#8732*

### What are the benefits of a vanpool?

#### *To Employers:*

- decreases the greatest number of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and reduces the most vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee of any commute mode, other than buses;
- provides cost-effective, easily-monitored use of transportation subsidies;
- has greatest impact of any non-transit mode on limited parking;
- highly-valued employee benefit.

#### *To Employees:*

- offers a highly reliable commute option that saves time and money;
- offers a flexible transit option with the group setting their own route and schedule;
- primary drivers pay no fare, and can use the van for personal travel;
- includes 24-hour emergency service;
- provides a comfortable, well-lit and air-conditioned commute vehicle;
- provides personalized service to help maintain the vanpool.

### How does vanpooling help meet CTR goals?

Helping employees form a new vanpool, or join an existing vanpool, reduces the number of single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) traveling to the worksite daily. Encouraging employees to rideshare is also helpful at worksites with limited parking, and may be an attractive option when a company is required to improve its transportation plan.

*(more)*

## **What are favorable conditions for vanpools?**

*Vanpools work best when:*

- the company provides incentives such as a FlexPass, guaranteed ride home program, ridesharing subsidies and preferential or discounted parking to employees who rideshare;
- the worksite has a large number of transit-dependent employees, and groups of employees commuting from similar home origins;
- employee parking is limited;
- few employees need to use personal vehicles for their work functions.

## **How much does a vanpool cost?**

- An average vanpool commute is 55 miles round trip. Metro's average vanpool fare for that commute is \$64 monthly. Compared to the \$462 cost to drive the distance alone (55 miles at \$ .40/mile for 21 work days), Metro vanpoolers enjoy a less stressful commute and save approximately \$400 (includes gas, oil, maintenance, tires, insurance, license, and depreciation).
- Fares are based on the group's round-trip mileage and number of riders in the van. Groups divide the monthly cost of the van by the number of riders, to determine each person's fare.
- To ensure vanpool groups' stability, Metro matches riders, organizes vanpools, trains drivers and bookkeepers, and offers ongoing help.
- Cross-Sound commuters can register with Washington State Ferries for guaranteed loading privileges and a special \$10 annual pass for the van and driver.

## **Answers to commonly asked questions:**

***Q. Why should an ETC establish a vanpool program at their worksite?***

**A.** Other than transit, no single transportation option eliminates as many single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips or reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee as well as a vanpool, especially in areas not well served by transit.

***Q. Does vanpooling work well at sites that have non-traditional work schedules?***

**A.** Vanpooling is an excellent incentive for employees with non-traditional work schedules, such as a "swing-shift", or for telecommuters. Employees who use vanpools less (or more) than five days a week pay a pro-rated fare outlined in Metro's VanPool Fare Schedule. Contact Metro for details.

***Q. When a vanpool requires a larger van, do fares increase or decrease?***

**A.** The fare per passenger usually decreases. Fare reductions depend on the length of the trip.

***Q. Can employees who live outside of King County use a van from Metro King County?***

**A.** Anyone with either a worksite destination, or home origin, within King County may apply.

***Q. Can employers use a Metro van as a business shuttle or to cover emergencies during the day?***

**A.** Yes, but certain conditions must be met. Ask your Metro contact for more information.